



Bias-Based Bullying Survey Developed by Prevent School Violence Illinois

Why a Survey About Bias-Based Bullying?

Bullying is a serious problem that involves imbalances of power based on difference. *In Illinois*, students report that the reasons they are most often verbally and physically harassed or threatened are (1) appearance (for example, height, weight, clothing) and (2) actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender expression (for example, not looking or acting enough “like a boy”).

The Prevent School Violence Act (PSVA) amended the Illinois School Code to prohibit bullying on the basis of a number of personal characteristics including race, color, religion, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation and others. (See 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7.) The PSVA also created the Illinois School Bullying Prevention Task Force to study bullying and develop meaningful solutions to the problem. *One of the Task Force’s central recommendations was for schools to collect more and better data about bias-based bullying.*

Prevent School Violence Illinois (PSVI), an organization convened to effectively prevent and address bullying and violence in Illinois schools, and researchers from the University of Illinois at Chicago have partnered to develop *the Bias-Based Bullying Survey (BBBS), a survey that can help schools better understand their students’ experiences with bias-based bullying.*

What Kinds of Questions are on the BBBS?

The Bias-Based Bullying Survey (BBBS) asks students

- About **victimization** by uncovering the perceptions of students who are bullied about the ways personal characteristics play a role
- About **perpetration** by uncovering students’ perceptions about the ways they involve personal characteristics when they engage in bullying behavior
- About **intervention** by surveying
 - students’ comfort intervening in instances of bullying that involve certain personal characteristics
 - students’ perceptions of the reasons other students and adults step in to address bullying involving certain personal characteristics
 - the reasons students declined to intervene when bullying that involved certain personal characteristics occurred

Why Give the BBBS?

- **Ensure Compliance With the PSVA**— The PSVA sets a community standard that helps schools determine whether they are meeting their obligations to prohibit bullying against their students on the basis of a comprehensive list of personal characteristics. The BBBS will give you specific information about the ways bullying plays out in your school to help you better comply with PSVA’s charge.
- **Improve Academic Outcomes**— Bullying and school violence result in serious social, emotional and academic outcomes. Recent research concluded that the passing rates on high school standardized exams were 3 percent to 6 percent lower in schools where students reported a more severe bullying climate, in addition to less teacher engagement and lower GPAs over time. Understanding the ways bullying – and the biases inherent in bullying – affect a school’s climate will contribute to improved academic success.
- **Target Scarce Resources**— The most effective way to prevent and address bullying is to embed prevention strategies (e.g., professional development) in a comprehensive approach to school improvement adapted to the particular needs of each school. The BBBS will give you the information you need to better target scarce resources by designing strategies that respond to the particular needs of your students and school community. In addition, if you elect to give the BBBS survey to your students on an annual basis, it will help you understand how your efforts are working to reduce bullying over time and continue to target your resources.

What if I Need Help Using the BBBS Data I Receive?

Call PSVI—If you decide that you would like assistance using your BBBS data to develop bullying prevention strategies, PSVI and its broad range of partners can help you figure out how to start.

- **Prevalence Data**— Find out how each of your students answered each of the thirty (30) questions.
- **Specialized Analyses**—Obtain specialized analyses, including, for example:
 - Prevalence data by demographic categories (e.g., race, gender)
 - How bias-based bullying predicts factors that contribute to the climate in your school (e.g., feelings of school safety, substance use, possession of weapons)
 - What types of bias-based bullying predict physical bullying

For information about working with PSVI to prevent bullying in your school, email Sarah Schriber, Executive Director, Prevent School Violence Illinois, at sarah@psvillinois.org.

Thank you for using the BBBS!